

EKG

An electrocardiogram or ECG (also called an EKG) is a common, painless test that records the electrical activity of the heart and converts it into lines called "waveforms" that can be seen on a monitor or printed out on paper. The waveforms created by the ECG can be divided into time segments to measure the rate of movement of the heart's electrical impulses.

You can expect to lay down on the table while the technician places electrodes (sticky patches) at the end of wires (or leads) are attached to each arm, leg and the chest. The ECG takes about ten minutes from start to finish, but the actual recording of the heart's electrical activity usually is done in a matter of seconds. The places where the electrodes are attached are cleaned, and in some cases, it may be necessary to shave or clip the hair. Patients are required to remain still, and are sometimes asked to hold their breath for short periods of time.